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Transmitted via email

Office of Inspector General
US Department of State
Room 8100, SA-3
2201 C Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20520-0308
oighotline@state.gov

Dear Office of Inspector General,

This is a complaint and request for a formal inquiry into a group known as PropOrNot (website propornot.com).

The Office of Inspector General should investigate the following:

1. Whether or not PropOrNot or affiliated entities have received federal funds.
2. Whether or not PropOrNot was in contact with the federal government (Department of State, Broadcasting Board of Governors, Voice of America), and the nature of that contact if it occurred.
3. Whether or not PropOrNot was in contact with entities in receipt of federal funds (Radio Free Europe/Liberty, the Atlantic Council, Center for European Policy Analysis), and the nature of that contact if it occurred.

On November 24, 2016, the Washington Post published a story entitled, “Russian Propaganda Effort Helped Spread ‘Fake News’ During the Election, Experts Say”. The Washington Post describes PropOrNot as “a nonpartisan collection of researchers with foreign policy, military and technology backgrounds”.

On December 1, 2016, the New Yorker published a story entitled, “The Propaganda about Russian Propaganda”. An alleged spokesperson for PropOrNot admitted that some of the group's 40 members include people who have worked for the government. Keith Chu, a spokesperson for Senator Ron Wyden's office, stated that one of PropOrNot's group members claimed to be a former US Department of State employee.

On its website, PropOrNot maintains a list of websites it has identified as Russian propaganda outlets. The blacklist includes media outlets such as CounterPunch, Truth-Out, Naked Capitalism, and WikiLeaks. Please see attachment “PropOrNot Blacklist” for full list of websites. PropOrNot has called for the news media outlets on its blacklist to be criminally investigated by federal law enforcement agencies. On its FAQ page, PropOrNot has stated, “We strongly suspect that some of the individuals involved have violated the Espionage Act, the Foreign Agent Registration Act, and other related laws, but determining that is up to the FBI and the DOJ.”

On November 17, 2016, the PropOrNot website included a list of “allies”. This list of allies included Polygraph Fact-Check, InterpreterMag, CEPA Infowar Project, and the Digital Forensics Research Lab. As of November 30, 2016, the PropOrNot website has changed the title of this list from “allies” to “related projects”. **PropOrNot's list of allies included websites being run directly by the federal government or by entities in receipt of federal government funds.**

Polygraph (aka Polygraph Fact-Check) runs the website polygraph.info. On its “about” page, Polygraph identifies itself as being run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (a Broadcasting Board of Governors grantee) and Voice of America (a federal government office within the Broadcasting Board of Governors).

The Interpreter (aka InterpreterMag) runs the website interpretermag.com. On December 23, 2015, The Interpreter announced on its website that it was becoming a project of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. On January 6, 2016, Radio Free Europe/Liberty's website (rferl.org) announced that The Interpreter was now being sponsored by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (a grantee of the Broadcasting Board of Governors).

The Center for European Policy Analysis (aka CEPA Infowar Project) runs the websites infowar.cepa.org and cepa.org. According to usaspending.gov, the Center for European Policy Analysis has received federal funds from both the Department of State and the Department of Defense.

The Digital Forensic Research Lab is project of the Atlantic Council (atlanticcouncil.org). According to usaspending.gov, the Atlantic Council has received numerous federal funding awards from the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy.

If the federal government or federal funds were involved in the creation or promotion of PropOrNot, this would be a serious violation of the 1st Amendment and the Smith-Mundt Act. The 1st Amendment guarantees the freedom of press and prohibits the US government from suppressing free speech. The Smith-Mundt Act prohibits the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors from using their federal funding to promote propaganda within the United States. The Office of Inspector General should also investigate other possible violations of federal law, regulations, and policy.

I authorize the Office of Inspector General to release my name and my email address ractack@mail.com in connection with this complaint.

I request to be notified by email if an investigation is initiated. I also request to be notified by email if the investigation is closed and the results of that investigation.

Please contact me at ractack@mail.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Rachael Tackett

Attachment:
PropOrNot Blacklist as of November 30, 2016

Description:

As of November 30, 2016, the following websites are listed on PropOrNot's website (propornot.com/p/the-list.html). PropOrNot describes the following websites as having been identified as Russian propaganda outlets.

activistpost.com
newcoldwar.org
4threvolutionarywar.wordpress.com
newstarget.com
aanirfan.blogspot.co.uk
newswithviews.com
abeldanger.net
nowtheendbegins.com
abovetopsecret.com
nutritionfacts.org
ahtribune.com
off-guardian.org
allnewspipeline.com
oftwominds.com
americanlookout.com
oilgeopolitics.net
americasfreedomfighters.com
opednews.com
amren.com
orientalreview.org
amtvmmedia.com
patriotrising.com
ancient-code.com
paulcraigroberts.org
anonews.co
platosguns.com
anonhq.com
pravda.ru
antiwar.com
pravdareport.com
asia-pacificresearch.com
prepperwebsite.com
assassinationscience.com
prisonplanet.com
baltimoregazette.com
rbth.com
barenakedislam.com
readynutrition.com
beforeitsnews.com

redflagnews.com
bignuggetnews.com
regated.com
blackagendareport.com
rense.com
blacklistednews.com
righton.com
christianfightback.com
rinf.com
collective-evolution.com
ronpaulinstitute.org
conservativedailypost.com
rt.com
consortiumnews.com
rumormillnews.com
corbettreport.com
ruptly.tv
cosmicscientist.com
russia-direct.org
countercurrents.org
russia-insider.com
counterinformation.wordpress.com
sentinelblog.com
counterpunch.org
sgtreport.com
dailyoccupation.com
shiftfrequency.com
dailystormer.com
shtfplan.com
darkmoon.me
silentmajoritypatriots.com
darkpoliticks.com
silverdoctors.com
davidstockmanscontracorner.com
sott.net
dcclthesline.com
southfront.org
dcleaks.com
sputniknews.com
defenddemocracy.press
stormcloudsgathering.com
dennismichaellynch.com
strategic-culture.org
disclose.tv
superstation95.com
disclosuremedia.net
survivopedia.com

drudgereport.com
the-newspapers.com
educate-yourself.org
theantimedia.org
educateinspirechange.org
thecommonsenseshow.com
endingthefed.com
thedailybell.com
endoftheamerican dream.com
thedadysheep.com
endtime.com
theduran.com
eutimes.net
theearthchild.co.za
eutopia.buzz
theeconomiccollapseblog.com
ewao.com
theeventchronicle.com
eyeopening.info
thefederalistpapers.org
fellowshipoftheminds.com
thefreethoughtproject.com
filmsforaction.org
themindunleashed.org
floridasunpost.com
thenewsdoctors.com
foreignpolicyjournal.com
therebel.media
fourwinds10.net
therussophile.org
freedomoutpost.com
thesaker.is
gaia.com
thesleuthjournal.com
galacticconnection.com
thetruenews.info
gangstergovernment.com
thetruthseeker.co.uk
gatesofvienna.net
thirdworldtraveler.com
geopolmonitor.com
toprightnews.com
globalresearch.ca
trueactivist.com
godlikeproductions.com
trunews.com
govtislaves.info

truth-out.org
greenvillepost.com
truthandaction.org
guccifer2.wordpress.com
truthorigin.com
hangthebankers.com
truthfeed.com
healthnutnews.com
truthkings.com
henrymakow.com
ufoholic.com
heresyblog.net
undergroundworldnews.com
humansarefree.com
unz.com
ihavethetruth.com
usanewshome.com
ihavethetruth.com
usapoliticsnow.com
in5d.com
usasupreme.com
informationclearinghouse.info
usdcrisis.com
infowars.com
usslibertyveterans.org
intellihub.com
vdare.com
intrepidreport.com
veteransnewsnow.com
investmentresearchdynamics.com
veterantoday.com
investmentwatchblog.com
vigilantcitizen.com
jackpineradicals.com
viralliberty.com
jamesrgrangerjr.com
voltairenet.org
jewsnews.co.il
wakeupthesheep.com
journal-neo.org
wakingtimes.com
katehon.com
washingtonsblog.com
katehon.org
wearechange.org
kingworldnews.com
weshapelife.org

lewrockwell.com
whatdoesitmean.com
libertyblitzkrieg.com
whatreallyhappened.com
libertywritersnews.com
wikileaks.com
makeamericagreattoday.com
wikileaks.org
memoryholeblog.com
wikispoofs.com
mintpressnews.com
worldnewspolitics.com
moonofalabama.org
worldpoliticsus.com
nakedcapitalism.com
www.fort-russ.com
naturalblaze.com
yournewswire.com
naturalnews.com
zerohedge.com